

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 GUATEM 05672 150029Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8548

INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5672

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GT, BH, UK, US

SUBJ: BELIZE DISPUTE: SKINNER-KLEE'S VIEWS

1. EMBOFF TALKED WITH MEMBER GUATEMALAN UNGA DEL, JORGE SKINNER-KLEE, EVENING OCT 10. HE HAD RETURNED TO GUATEMALA A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND WOULD STAY UNTIL THE END OF MONTH, TENDING TO HIS LAW PRACTICE, BEFORE GOING BACK TO NY.

2. HE SAID GUATEMALAN DEL HAD GIVEN UP HOPE OF STAVING OFF A "DISASTROUS" RESOLUTION ON BELIZE; THEY WERE ALL DISCOURAGED AND BITTER ABOUT THE AMERICAN "DECISION" NOT TO SUPPORT GUATEMALA. EMBOFF SAID HE WAS AWARE OF NO SUCH DECISION; THERE WAS A VERY STRONG, AND IN HIS VIEW UNDERSTANDABLE, RELUCTANCE TO PUT OURSELVES IN THE MIDDLE OF A DISPUTE WHICH WAS NOT OURS. EMOFF THOUGHT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD STATED US POLICY VERY WELL IN THE PRESS STATEMENT HE HAD MADE THAT DAY. SKINNER-KLEE SAID, "WHAT DID YOU EXPECT HIM TO SAY PUBLICLY? THAT THE AMERICANS ARE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 GUATEM 05672 150029Z

SCREWING US?".

3. OF COURSE, HE SAID, HE EXPECTED THE UNITED STATES TO ABSTAIN WHEN THE RESOLUTION CAME TO A VOTE-FOR THAT MATTER HE EXPECTED THE UK TO ABSTAIN AS WELL. ONLY A LONELY FEW WOULD JOIN GUATEMALA IN VOTING AGAINST IT. EMBOFF EXPRESSED ASTONISHMENT THAT THE UK WOULD HAVE SO LITTLE CONTROL OVER THE RESOLUTION THAT IT WOULD FIND IT NECESSARY TO ABSTAIN WHEN IT CAME TO A VOTE. EMBOFF PERSONALLY HOPED THAT A RESOLUTION COULD BE WORKED OUT THAT ALL COULD JOIN IN SUPPORTING. SKINNER-KLEE DID NOT REPLY DIRECTLY, BUT MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE THOUGHT THIS WAS NO LONGER POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF WHAT HE REGARDED AS BRITISH HOSTILITY AND AMERICAN INDIFFERENCE.

4. EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER GUATEMALANS HAD TALKED TO BRITISH. HE SAID THEY HAD; PERM REP SIR IVOR RICHARD WAS VERY ABLE, CLEVER, SHREWD, AND A PLEASURE TO DEAL WITH. BUT FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN WAS COLD AND CONTEMPTUOUS. GUATEMALANS DETECTED NO INCLINATION TO COMPROMISE.

5. BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THEIR GREATEST DISAPPOINTMENT HAD BEEN WITH US. HE SAID IT WAS NOTORIOUS THAT ONLY WESTERN HEMISPHERE GOVT OFFICIAL STATE DEPT HAS ANY SYMPATHY WITH IS DUDLEY THOMPSON OF JAMAICA. HE CLAIMED THAT IN GUATEMALANS' MEETING WITH ASST SECRETARY ROGERS (PRESUMABLY THE ONE OF SEPT 24, STATE 233078). HE HAD ASKED ASST SECRETARY WHY UNITED STATES FOUND IT SO DIFFICULT TO SUPPORT GUATEMALA, AND MR ROGERS HAD SAID BECAUSE IT PUTS US IN THE MIDDLE BETWEEN FRIENDS. SKINNER-KLEE ASKED WHAT FRIENDS, AND CLAIMED THAT ASST SECRETARY HAD FINALLY SAID, "THE JAMAICANS".

6. SKINNER-KLEE SAID DISILLUSIONMENT WAS ESPECIALLY BITTER FOR GUATEMALA BECAUSE OF ITS LONG HISTORIC FIRENDRSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. "COLOSSUS OF THE NORTH" FOR US, HE SAID, HAS ALWAYS BEEN MEXICO, AND WE HAVE SOUGHT CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US AS COUNTERWEIGHT TO MEXICO; INDEED, SO HAD, AT TIMES, UNITED STATES, WHICH HAD ARMED GUATEMALAN ARMY IN

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PAGE 03 GUATEM 05672 150029Z

1917 BECAUSE OF ITS CONCERN ABOUT MEXICO AND ZIMMERMANN TELEGRAM.

7. TRAGEDY, SKINNER-KLEE SAID, WAS THAT US ATTITUDE LEFT GUATEMALA NO CHOICE BUT MILITARY ACTION WHICH COULD WELL END WITH ARMY IN DEFEAT AND GUATEMALA IN "CHAOS". IN PASSIONATE AND CLEARLY DEEPLY-FELT WORDS, HE SAID DESTRUCTION OF ARMY'S PRESTIGE WOULD DESTROY

"INSTITUTIONALITY"WHICH MAINTAINED GUATEMALAN STATUS
QUO.

8. AND SO, HE CONCLUDED, HE NOW STAYED UP NIGHTS
THINKING UP WAYS TO STEP ON UNCLE SAM'S TOES. "THERE
MUST BE SOME WAY TO DO IT HARD ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU
NOTICE US."

9. COMMENT: EVEN AFTER MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR
SKINNEER-KLEE'S FONDNESS FOR OVERSTATEMENT AND COLORFUL
PHRASES, AND FOR GOG'S STANDARD TACTIC OF TRYING TO
SCARE US INTO INTERVENING, IT APPEARS - INCREDIBLE AS
IT SEEMS- THAT THE GUATEMALANS DID EXPECT AMERICAN
SUPPORT IN THESE VERY EARLY STAGES OF THE NEGOTIATIONS
AT UN AND WERE BITTERLY DISAPPOINTED NOT TO GET IT.
IT IS INCREASINGLY CLEAR, IF THERE WERE EVER ANY DOUBT,
THAT WHATEVER GOES WRONG IN THE DISPUTE, WE WILL BE
BLAMED FOR IT.
MELOY

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